

# SERMON CXX.



**W**E have taken an account how the Spirit of God applies himself inwardly to the *Understanding*, both by Conviction and Illumination. We proceed now to his applying himself to the *Will*, and working a saving Change in that, which is here called the *renewing of our Wills*. About this Work, the Christian World is full of unhappy disputes, occasioned by the eager Patrons of Free-Will. But my business here is not Polemical. I shall not here discourse Physically, of the Nature of the Reasonable Soul; or inquire whether  
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whether the Understanding and Will in it be in themselves two distinct Faculties; or one having in it these powers, distinguished in themselves or our conceptions. Our knowledge of the nature of our own Souls, is very shallow and confused. But for our right Conception of the affair before us, we may observe these Conclusions,

1. *THAT the product of Effectual Vocation, is our Believing on Christ for Salvation.* This will afterwards be spoken to. Here only I mention it, as a Ground of what follows. We are therefore told in the former, that Faith is wrought in us, in our Effectual Calling. For, by the Gospel we are invited to come to Christ for Life, and in Believing we answer this Call.

2. *THAT in this Believing there is required both a Judgment and an Election.* Faith, according to the Gospel sense of it, contains both an Assent, and a Consent. There is a judging of Christ to be an Object suitable for the man to rely upon, and every way sufficient to do that for us, which we go to him for; and a choice made of him to be the Object of this trust. For, both of these go into every humane action; and it is certain that there is no act of saving Faith without both. If we do not judge of the Lord Jesus Christ, to be such an One as can save us, we cannot trust in him as a Saviour. *Psal. 9. 10. And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee.* And if we acknowledge never so plausibly the Gospel Truths, yet if we do not reject all other Objects, and rely upon him on a free choice, we are Unbelievers.

3. *THAT these are two distinct Operations of the Soul.* However there be a concomitancy of them in the act of believing, yet in themselves they are not one and the same thing, but diverse. It is one thing to declare that we find a thing to be thus and so, and another thing to pass an act thereupon, in either chusing or refusing the thing according as it is so found. And though this latter is built upon the former, yet it is another thing quite different from it.

4. *HENCE, They infer two diverse Powers in the Soul to exert them.* As passing a judgment on a thing, and passing an act of choice or refusal, are in themselves vastly different, so we must conceive the power of exerting them to be as different; so that they must flow from two principles, really diverse one from another. As without knowledge there can be no judgment pass, so without liberty, there can no election be made. Now reason tells us, that knowledge is one thing, and liberty another.

5. *THAT the former of these is that which we call Understanding, and the latter the Will.* Which, though they belong to one and the same Soul, yet are several powers of it, and accordingly are generally supposed to be distinct faculties. However, the Word of God every where speaks of them distinctly, and assigns these actions accordingly to them;

*That whereby we discern things, and give in our verdict about them, is called the Understanding: That whereby we determine on our Objects, and resolve upon our Actions, we call the Will.*

6. *THAT both of these powers are altogether depraved by Sin, in respect of spiritual things.* Not that man's Apostacy hath rooted out these faculties, or taken away from them their natures, as they belong to meer humanity, for then should man cease to be a reasonable Creature, or treatable as such. But as these powers were put into man, to capacitate him to serve God as a free and voluntary Agent, and were accordingly sanctified by the impression of the image of God upon them; so are they spoiled by the Amision of that image, and become unable to serve to their end. The pravity of the nature of man by sin is universal. All the powers in him are undone by it. As therefore his Judgment is lost about the things of God, because he hath lost the power of discerning them; (*as, 1 Cor. 2. 14.*) So his Elective power is gone, as to any divine Object, and his Will is utterly unable to chuse Christ, and refuse other objects for him. Hence that, *Job. 5. 40.* And therefore the giving the Will, as well as the enlightning of the Mind, is ascribed to God in the Gospel, *Phil. 2. 13. For it is God which working in you, both to do will and to do of his good pleasure.*

7. *HENCE, Both of these must be restored in Conversion.* It is not enough, as some think, that the Understanding be perswaded of the Truth, and brought to give a full assent to it, as if the Will must thereupon spontaneously follow it, without any more ado. For, tho' when the Mind is savingly enlightened, the Will doth ever close in with that light, and resign itself to it, yet the reason is, because the regenerating Work of the Spirit is wrought in the whole man at once. He never gives a new Understanding, but a new Will with it. The whole body of sanctifying Grace being created, and infused at once. Hence they are put together, *Act. 26. 18. To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.*

*THAT therefore which now lies before us, is, to consider what is done by the Spirit of God in the renewing of our Wills, so as to put into them a power and inclination to make choice of Jesus Christ, and believe in him to Salvation.* For our right taking up whereof, let these things be considered,

1. *THAT there are two sorts of Actions performed by the Will, viz. Elicite and Imperate; the former immediately by it self, and the latter by the affections. The Elicite acts of the Will are in chusing or rejecting the Object before it.* This act is performed inwardly by it, and belongs to the sovereignty of the Will in the man, by vertue whereof he is a free Agent. Hence such a precept is given us, *Amos 5. 15. Hate the evil, and love the good.* And that is

is given as a sign of a persons being capable of acting as a man, *Isai. 7. 16. For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and chuse the good. The Imperate acts of the Will are those by which it puts its Elections in execution, and pursues them to effect; in which it nextly makes use of the Affections, by which it managetb the whole man.* Whether the Affections belong to the Will in man, and are only the various motions of it, or whether they be distinct faculties in him, and are seated in his inferior powers, I dispute not. It is certain, that they are the instruments by which the Will performs its Imperate actions, and in which it is either carried to or from the object.

2. *THAT both these sorts of Actions are requisite to actual Believing on Christ.* The act of Faith which is exerted by the Soul in its closure with Christ in Effectual Calling, consists of both an absolute choice made of him, and a going out of the whole Soul to him, as such an Object. The former of these is exprest in that, *Psal. 73. 25. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.* The latter in that, *Psal. 63. 8. My soul followeth hard after thee.* And for this reason, the act of Faith is often exprest by love, desire, hope, &c. because in every of these the Soul is carried out to him, as the Object of its trust & dependance.

3. *THAT there is a miserable impotency and malignity in the Will of fallen man, with respect to both of these.* The pravity of man's nature, by the efficacy of Original Sin, is not only discovered in the blindness of his mind, but also in the indisposition and perverseness of his Will. And here,

(1.) *IT labours of utter impotency to make this choice, or to pursue it.* Sin hath led man to chuse another object, and they cannot alter it, *Isai. 44. 20. He seedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?* It hath alienated their hearts from God, and they cannot turn them again. And on this account they are said to be *without strength*, *Rom. 5. 6.* And Paul sets forth the man's insufficiency in this regard, as to himself, *2 Cor. 3. 5.* The Will indeed remains a Will, and hath not lost its natural power; it cannot be forced. But they mistake who think the Will is spoiled of its natural liberty, unless it retains a power of indifferency to all things that are opposite, to chuse or refuse on either hand. That it hath such a liberty in some things is not to be denied; but then they are things natural, not things spiritual. It sufficeth that the Will is not forced, while it retains its spontaneity, and acts willingly, and not contrary to its inclination; which spontaneity is consistent with an impotency to some actions, and a necessity of others. There are some things which a man cannot but chuse and pursue, and others which he cannot but refuse and avoid, and yet he doth it with a full freedom, or spontaneous acting therein.

(2.) *IT also labours of woful malignity.* Original Sin hath so defiled the Will, as it is filled with an engaged enmity against the Will of God, *Rom. 8. 7.* It is perversly set to depart from God, and pursue the things that are contrary to him. And accordingly it is set against believing on Christ, when revealed and offered in the Gospel. Hence that, *Joh. 5. 40.* The corrupt lusts that are seated in it, fill it with all malice against the Gospel-way of Salvation.

4. *THAT as long as the Will is under the dominion of this impotency & malignity, it can exert neither of these acts upon Christ.* The power of Original Sin on the Wills of men is such, that they cannot resist it of themselves. The Will is made a Captive, and how should it be able to free itself while it is a voluntary Captive? And so it must needs be, till released from that Captivity. Lust, that hath the regimen of the Soul, holds it fast; the ingenerate contrariety there is in it unto God, keeps it bound. And yet it all this while acts as a Will; though as a depraved and corrupted Will. The viciousness of its nature carries it forth, and holds it fast to the bias, or corrupt inclination which is upon it. How should the man chuse Christ while other objects have & possess his heart. Hence that, *Joh. 5. 44. How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour which cometh from God only?* And how should he go forth after Christ, whose affections are glewed to other objects? These therefore must be subdued, if ever this be done.

5. *THAT hence there must be a renewing Change wrought in the Will, in order to its being thus enabled to chuse with Christ.* Could we suppose never so much light let into the Understanding, causing it to discern all the preciousness of Christ as he is revealed in the Gospel; yet if the Will remain in the same posture it is in in the man's natural estate, it would be impossible for it to chuse Christ, and to love him. There must therefore be a renovation on it. When therefore the Apostle had spoken of our being *renewed in the image of our mind*, *Eph. 4. 23.* he exemplifies it with respect to the Will, *ver. 24. And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness, and true holiness.* A new Understanding, without a new Heart, will never amount to a thorough Conversion. As long as the Will remains possessed of corrupt lusts, and hath no other power in it, it can never embrace Christ.

6. *THIS renewing Change is wrought, by creating a new principle of saving Grace in the Will and Affections.* It is certain, that if ever the man believe, he must have power to believe. This power is that which we call the habit of Faith; which habit is not infused by it self, but together with all the other regenerating Graces, which are wrought in the Soul by the Spirit: An Account whereof we before took. This is that which is called the *giving of a new heart, and the putting in*

in of a new Spirit, &c. Ezek. 36. 26. which cannot intend new faculties, but a new saving impression of Grace on the faculties of the Soul in the man. Now, how this is done on the Will and Affections, with respect to Effectual Vocation, or the disposing of the heart to believing on Christ, may be considered in three or four particulars,

(1.) *THE Spirit of God, together with the light which he lets into the Understanding, puts into the heart an high esteem of Jesus Christ.* Christ is proposed as the Object of Faith, to persuade the Soul to accept of him as such. He is commended to the man as a Glorious One, in all his fulness of sufficiency. Now not only is the mind irradiated with these discoveries, so as to subscribe to the truth of them; but there is with it put into the heart an appreciation of him: He is made to it exceeding precious: The Soul hath an impression of his Excellency upon it, so as to value him, *the chief of ten Thousands*, Cant. 5. 10.

(2.) *THE Spirit of God forms Christ in the Soul.* The Apostle hath such an expression, Gal. 4. 19. *My little children of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you.* He then forms Christ in the man, when he brings Christ into the heart, and gives him a room there; when the Soul is made to feel those impressions on it, whereby Christ comes into it, and takes up his dwelling and abode in it. The heart is taken up for him, and Christ takes possession of it by his Spirit. Hence we read of the *Spirit's dwelling in us*, Rom. 8. 11. and of *Christ's being in us*, ver. 10.

(3.) *HE bereaveth puts into the Will, an irresistible spontaneity, to make Choice of Christ, as the Object of his Trust.* Here is no force put upon the Will, but there is an influence on it suitable to its nature. There is such an impression made upon it, that carries it forth with the greatest freedom. Now this impression it self, is properly the renovation of the Will, as to its elective power, in order to the Elicit act: And as it doth it with greatest freedom, so it cannot do otherwise. The Spouse therefore tells us how it was with her unexpectedly, Cant. 6. 12. *Or ever I was aware, my soul made me as the chariots of Ammi-nadib.* And accordingly we are told, in Psal. 110. 3. *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.*

(4.) *AND he puts a new spring into the Affections, by infusing the habits of Grace into them, suitable to their Operations.* The Affections are of two sorts, *seperating* and *closing*; suited to the two sorts of Elicit acts in the Will, *refusing* and *choosing*. These also are very exorbitant by reason of Sin: But the Spirit of God puts a new inclination into them: He sanctifies them, by making the *seperating* Affections fit to fly from every other object of trust, and the *closing* ones to carry the Soul out after Christ. The Affections are spiritualized, and now *set on the things above*, Col. 3. 2.

THUS is the Work wrought in the Soul which belongs to *passive Conversion*, and by it, the Grace of Faith, together with all other Graces is planted in the man.

WE now proceed, very briefly, to consider the result of all this, or what posture it puts the Soul into in order to believing; which is express'd in these words, *He doth persuade and enable us to Embrace Christ on the Gospel-Offer.* The word *persuade*, may be applied either to the Work it self in passive Conversion, or to the act of Faith that is consequent thereupon. We at present shall consider it only in the former respect. And so there are two things here to be observed, viz. 1. *That there is a new power put into the Soul to accept of Christ.* 2. *That there is also a disposition or inclination put into it, thus to do.* I shall not discourse of them distinctly, only considering them together, let us observe these things,

1. *THAT in the fore-described Work, there are all the principles of a saving Faith wrought in the man.* The work of Grace produced in the heart by the Spirit of God in Conversion, is a furniture fitting him for that service which by the apostacy he was disabled for. They are the habits of Graces that are infused into the man in it. The spiritual Illumination let into the Understanding, and the renovation bestowed on the Will, are the seed of Faith in the Soul.

2. *THAT the design of their being put into the man is for the acting of Faith.* Doubtless all the active principles that are put into the Creature, whether in the first or in the new Creation, were designed for the Creatures acting them; otherwise they had been in vain: whereas it is certain, that God doth nothing in vain. The end of spiritual Principles is for spiritual Performances. As God gave man eyes to see withal, and hands to Work with, so he gives a man Faith to Believe withal. The design of Grace is to bring men to Salvation. Hence that title, Tit. 2. 11. *For the grace of God that bringeth Salvation, hath appeared to all men.* And how is that, but by bringing them to compliance with the terms of the new Covenant, in which Salvation is offered them. Now in those terms, actual Believing is called for, and thereupon the promise so runs, Mar. 16. 16. *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.*

3. *HENCE, They must needs bring such a power with them into the man, as to enable him to embrace an offered Saviour.* Else they would still be in vain. For a thing is then vain, not only when it is for no end, but also when it misseth of its end, and especially when it so doth, for want of ability to answer it. It is true, all the gracious habits put in by the Spirit have a necessary dependance on his co-operation for their acting. As Phil. 2. 13. *For it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.* Joh. 15. 5. *I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.* But still

still they have in them an ordinate power, i. e. they are by them furnished for every good work. The man is now alive, and so fitted for life-acts, Eph. 2. 1. *And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins.* The man is able in his speech, to answer the call of Christ, as the man that hath an Eye, and sight in it, is able to look upon an object.

4. *AND the very nature of these Principles, is to dispose the man to Believe.* As they bring with them a power, so they put into the man a disposition to believe in Christ, to accept of and imbrace him, according as he is thus offered to them. It is true, there is a drawing of the Spirit, in order to our following. According to Cant. 1. 4. But the way in which the Spirit draws forth the act of Faith, is by giving to the principle wrought in the man its natural motion; so that when the Understanding is spiritually enlightened, and discerns all the glorious Excellencies in Christ as an Object of trust; and the Will is filled with Christ dwelling in it, and all the Affections are influenced with this Grace; the operation of them is natural and irresistable. Christ is their Object, and they cannot rest till they carry the man forth to him. He is their Center, and they draw naturally to him. And the man can truly say, Psal. 42. 1. *As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.*

USE. I. *LEARN hence, that the Work of Effectual Calling must needs transcend the Creatures power of producing in himself.* It is not enough for the Spirit of God to offer the Invitation to us in the Gospel, and use the Arguments persuasive to allure us to it, and then leave it to our own free will, whether we will accept of it or no. Well might the Apostle say, Eph. 2. 8, 9. *For by grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of your selves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.* The Will must be persuaded if ever it imbraces Christ; and there is no believing but what is voluntary. And the Will must be renewed if ever it be persuaded. *The carnal mind is enmity it self,* Rom. 8. 7. And till that enmity be taken away, and the heart a new disposed, it can never comply. In vain therefore do men pretend to Faith, who never had such a Work of power wrought in them. For so the Apostle stiles that, 2 Thef. 1. 11. *Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power.* Eph. 1. 19. *And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power.*

USE. II. *THIS tells us whether to go, and where to wait for this Grace.* Truly we are to be found in the use of all the means of God's appointment: For we are told, Rom. 1. 16. *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, & also*

*to the Greek.* But we must here wait for the operations of the Spirit in and with these means; and accordingly renounce all dependence on the means, or on ourselves in use of them.

USE. III. *ARE we Effectually Called, Let us then ascribe the whole Praise of it to God.* Let the whole Glory be ascribed to him. *Are we new born? It is not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God,* Joh. 1. 13. Let us then thankfully celebrate his kindness, and confess that it is by the Grace of God that we are what we are.

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